

CORRECTIONS STANDARDS AUTHORITY**600 Bercut Drive**

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www.cdcr.ca.gov/Divisions_Boards/CSA

August 19, 2010

Donald Blevins
Chief Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Probation Department
9150 East Imperial Highway
Downey CA 90242

Dear Chief Blevins:

During the Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) 2006-2008 Biennial Inspection of Los Angeles County Probation Department's Juvenile Halls; Central, Los Padrinos and Barry J. Nidorf were found out of compliance with sections of Title 24, California Code of Regulations (CCR) due to chronically crowded conditions in some of the units. Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code (W&I) Section 209(e), which addresses issues of noncompliance that arise from sustained occupancy levels that are above the population capacity, CSA required that the county submit a suitability plan (SP). The plan proposed long and short term strategies to address the crowded conditions. The plan received on January 6, 2009 was accepted and based on that document, the CSA Board found the juvenile halls suitable for the confinement of minors. The CSA Board directed CSA staff to conduct regular SP visits to the juvenile halls and requested updates on the status of crowding at subsequent board meetings.

CSA staff have made quarterly SP visits since that meeting. Our most recent SP visit took place August 17, 2010. We met with Detention Services Bureau (DSB) Chief Elizabeth Garcia, Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall Superintendent Sean Porter, Barry J. Nidorf building directors, Acting DSB Special Assistant Laura Villalvazo, and DSB Staff Assistant Stephanie Mahdessian. Although our SP visit was limited to a single day, your staff assembled needed documentation from each juvenile hall for our review. This included daily population sheets and documentation of disciplinary due process, institutional assessments and plans and restraint records. The combined rated capacity (RC) of all of the juvenile halls is 1,824. The DSB-wide population on the date of our visit was 1,130. Ms. Garcia and Mr. Porter shared details regarding the decreased bureau wide population and in Barry J. Nidorf specifically.

The DSB submits population data on each unit twice each month. We are very appreciative of the timeliness and detail of the data received. Since March 12, 2010, every unit of each juvenile hall was at or below its RC. We visited each unit at Barry J. Nidorf to confirm the reported population and staffing. We found that the staffing levels met, and in most cases exceeded,

minimum standards. We also made note of conditions of the living units, reviewed unit logs and interviewed youth and staff.

As we did during our last SP visit as a follow up to our biennial inspection, we focused our interviews on implementation of recreation scheduling which affords at least the minimum of 5 hours of recreation on non-school days. We also inquired about the program options available for youth who choose not to participate in religious services. The posted recreation schedules clearly outlined the indoor and outdoor recreation and programming offered on each unit. Staff verified the multiple opportunities for recreation and youth confirmed that they are afforded more than the minimum amount of recreation time. The particulars of offering an alternate activity to youth who choose not to participate in religious programs have been challenging in the high security compound. Directors continue to fine tune schedules and make thoughtful use of program space to offer both.

The CSA Board has requested updates on crowding in Los Angeles County Juvenile Halls. The last status report was approved at the March 11, 2010 meeting. The next crowding update will be at the September 9, 2010 board meeting.

Please continue to submit population accounting records to CSA. In the event that population levels at the juvenile halls exceed the limits specified in the SP and the totality of conditions is found lacking, CSA will re-initiate the process for determining if the facility is suitable for the confinement of minors as described in WIC §209(e). Please contact me if I can be of technical assistance.

Sincerely,

Toni Gardner, Field Representative
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C:

Elizabeth Garcia, Detention Services Bureau Chief
Sean Porter, Superintendent, Barry J. Nidorf Juvenile Hall
Cheryl Cooke, Superintendent, Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall
Daniel Aceves, Superintendent, Central Juvenile Hall
Presiding Juvenile Court Judge, Los Angeles County
President of the Probation Commission, County of Los Angeles
Chair, Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles County
County Administrator, Los Angeles County
Brence Culp, Deputy CEO, Los Angeles County